

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:
tuning means (22) for tuning a channel frequency that provides
5 emergency alert signals indicating an emergency event;
processing means (27) for enabling an alert output responsive to said
emergency alert signals; and
a single user input button (30) for receiving tactile user inputs to control
said emergency alert function, wherein said single user input button (30) is the only
10 tactile user input means integral with said apparatus (20) that is capable of controlling
said emergency alert function.
2. The apparatus (20) of claim 1, wherein said single user input button
(30) includes:
15 a plurality of different states; and
said apparatus (20) performs one or more different operations
responsive to each of said states based on user programming.
3. The apparatus (20) of claim 1, further comprising illuminating means
20 (31) for illuminating said single user input button (30) based on a severity level of said
emergency event.
4. The apparatus (20) of claim 3, wherein said illuminating means (31)
illuminates said single user input button (30) using:
25 a first color if said severity level represents a first level;
a second color if said severity level represents a second level; and
a third color if said severity level represents a third level.
5. The apparatus (20) of claim 4, wherein said first, second and third
30 colors are each combined with a fourth color.

6. The apparatus (20) of claim 5, wherein said illuminating means (31) illuminates said single user input button (30) using only said fourth color when said emergency alert function is not activated.

5 7. The apparatus (20) of claim 3, wherein said illuminating means (31) illuminates said single user input button (30) using:

two colors if said severity level represents a first level;
three colors if said severity level represents a second level; and
four colors if said severity level represents a third level.

10 8. A method (300) for operating an apparatus having an emergency alert function, comprising:

tuning a channel frequency that provides emergency alert signals indicating an emergency event (320);

15 providing an alert output responsive to said emergency alert signals (340); and

20 receiving tactile user inputs to control said emergency alert function via a single user input button, wherein said single user input button is the only tactile user input means integral with said apparatus that is capable of controlling said emergency alert function (340).

9. The method (300) of claim 8, wherein said single user input button (30) includes a plurality of different states, and further comprised of:

25 performing one or more different operations responsive to each of said states based on user programming (340).

10. The method (300) of claim 8, further comprised of illuminating said single user input button based on a severity level of said emergency event (340).

11. The method (300) of claim 10, wherein said illuminating step (340) includes illuminating said single user input button using:

- a first color if said severity level represents a first level;
- a second color if said severity level represents a second level; and
- a third color if said severity level represents a third level.

12. The method (300) of claim 11, further comprised of combining each of said first, second and third colors with a fourth color.

13. The method (300) of claim 12, further comprised of illuminating said single user input button using only said fourth color when said emergency alert function is not activated.

14. The method (300) of claim 10, wherein said illuminating step (340) includes illuminating said single user input button using:

- two colors if said severity level represents a first level;
- three colors if said severity level represents a second level; and
- four colors if said severity level represents a third level.

15. A television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:

a tuner (22) operative to tune a channel frequency that provides emergency alert signals indicating an emergency event;

a processor (27) operative to enable an alert output responsive to said emergency alert signals; and

a single user input button (30) for receiving tactile user inputs to control said emergency alert function, wherein said single user input button (30) is the only tactile user input element integral with said television signal receiver (20) that is capable of controlling said emergency alert function.

16. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 15, wherein said single user input button (30) includes:

a plurality of different states; and

5 said television signal receiver (20) performs one or more different operations responsive to each of said states based on user programming.

17. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 15, further comprising a light (31) operative to illuminate said single user input button (30) based on a severity level
10 of said emergency event.

18. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 17, wherein said light (31) illuminates said single user input button (30) using:

a first color if said severity level represents a first level;

15 a second color if said severity level represents a second level; and

a third color if said severity level represents a third level.

19. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 18, wherein said first, second and third colors are each combined with a fourth color.

20. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 19, wherein said light (31) illuminates said single user input button (30) using only said fourth color when said emergency alert function is not activated.

25 21. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 17, wherein said light (31) illuminates said single user input button (30) using:

two colors if said severity level represents a first level;

three colors if said severity level represents a second level; and

30 four colors if said severity level represents a third level.